

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 6499

C 249 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the administration, collection, use, and enforcement of tolls.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Murray and Haugen; by request of Department of Transportation).

Senate Committee on Transportation
House Committee on Transportation

Background: The Department of Transportation (DOT) currently operates one toll bridge, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and has authority to toll the State Route (SR) 520 bridge, which is anticipated to begin tolling in 2011. Tolls are paid electronically by customers with a pre-paid account and a transponder in their vehicle, or manually at a toll booth with cash or credit.

Under current law, failure to pay a toll is a traffic infraction with a penalty of \$40 that goes to the local jurisdiction's court, plus a penalty amount of three times the cash toll that goes to the account of the facility on which the violation occurred. A hold on a person's vehicle registration may occur if the traffic infraction penalty is not paid.

The Toll Collection Account allows for the deposit of customer pre-paid account funds prior to transactions occurring on a specific facility. Funds are then moved to the appropriate facility once a toll charge has been incurred.

Summary: Tolls may be paid after using a toll facility via a photo toll that identifies a vehicle by its license plate. Photo tolls may be paid using a customer account, or in response to a toll bill. Tolls may also be paid using existing methods.

Failure to pay a toll detected through a photo toll system is a civil penalty to be issued by DOT with a fine of \$40, plus the original toll amount and associated fees. Photo toll customers have 80 days from the time they use the toll facility to pay the toll before the toll charge becomes a civil penalty. DOT must develop an administrative adjudication process to review appeals of civil penalties. A hold on a person's vehicle registration may occur if the civil penalty is not paid.

DOT must conduct outreach and education on tolling at least six months prior to commencing all-electronic tolling, and ongoing quarterly reports on civil penalty data.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Beginning on July 1, 2011, penalties deposited into the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Account must first be used to repay any loans from the Motor Vehicle Account. Penalties resulting from non-payment of a toll on the SR 520 corridor are deposited into the SR 520 Civil Penalties Account if ESSB 6392 is enacted by June 30, 2010.

The Toll Collection Account uses are expanded to allow for operations that benefit multiple toll facilities to be cleared through this account. At least monthly, operating activities and interest earnings must be distributed to the appropriate toll facility, using an equitable distribution methodology determined by DOT in consultation with the Office of Financial Management.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	1
House	55	42

Effective: June 10, 2010